



“Refugee” exhibit confronts forced migration, identity, and shared humanity

PITTSBURGH — Pittsburgh-based artist Michael Fratangelo will host an opening reception on Friday, April 10 at 6 p.m. at the Penn State School of Visual Arts, held in the Allen Street Grill’s Corner Room, 100 W. College Ave., State College.

The event will include a question-and-answer session with Fratangelo about his recent work, an exhibition of large-scale paintings called “Refugee,” which invites audiences to confront urgent questions about forced migration, identity, and our shared humanity.

Through the gestural abstract works featured in the exhibition, Fratangelo asks viewers to see themselves in the suffering of others and to

recognize that displacement can happen to anyone.

Having previously created socially engaged work with “Iraq: Paintings of War” in 2005, Fratangelo said he felt compelled to respond to this contemporary crisis.

Premiering in 2024 at Atithi Studios in Pittsburgh, “Refugee” explores the immigration crisis in Europe and incorporates photographs featured in the New York Times that document the crisis.

On large 6’ x 5’ canvases, Fratangelo uses acrylic, latex and glitter to capture the human experience of displacement.

While creating the paintings, Fratangelo said he approached the work with reverence for the human stories of

the Middle Eastern and North African people he depicted.

“Though viewers may find familiar religious symbols, the work transcends individual faiths to address universal human vulnerability,” Fratangelo said in an artist’s statement.

Fratangelo said he hopes visitors to the exhibition share his refusal to look away from images of suffering and recognize the shared humanity they reveal.

Classes, student organizations and university offices are encouraged to visit the Woskob Family Gallery, a unit of the College of Arts and Architecture.

Inquiries can be directed to woskob@psu.edu.

The exhibit runs through



Courtesy of Penn State University

Pittsburgh-based artist Michael Fratangelo will host an opening reception on Friday, April 10 at 6 p.m. at the Penn State School of Visual Arts. The exhibit runs through June 5.

June 5 at the College of Arts and Architecture’s Woskob Family Gallery, located at 146 S. Allen Street in downtown State College. A Pittsburgh-based artist, Fratangelo graduated from Penn State in 2001 with a bachelor’s degree in art education.